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MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

OCTOBER 1995

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## ACCESSIBILITY AT THE POLLING PLACE

By Mike Cooney, Secretary of State

One of the basic principles of our government is that everyone has the right to participate in the making of decisions by exercising their right to vote. Here in Montana we are lucky to consistently have one of the highest voter turnout rates in the nation. But we continue to look at ways to make sure more people get involved.

How we vote, or even if we choose to vote, is a personal matter that each of us must decide for ourselves. However, no person should be denied the right to vote because of obstacles that prevent or discourage their participation in the election process. The State of Montana has taken a strong stand to ensure that all citizens are able to cast their ballots.

Before any polling place can be used, the county election administrator or made an on-site survey of the location to determine its accessibility. They test the polling place by following the actual route an elector would take when going to vote and determining if it meets the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards criteria and the Administrative Rules written by the Secretary of State.

Whenever possible, polling places chosen must be accessible or made accessible by election day. The law requires that the list of the county polling places be published in the newspaper before each election. Included in this notice must be the accessibility rating for each precinct.

If a person with a disability or elderly voter is assigned to an inaccessible to an inaccessible polling place, he or she has several alternatives. These include:

- **Voting by absentee ballot** - If a person is physically unable to go to the polls, they may, by written request to their county election administrator, ask that they be sent an absentee ballot. For this year's November 7th municipal elections, a voter may request an absentee ballot from August 24 until noon of November 6th, but remember to leave time for mail delivery. Additionally, if you do not wish to go to the election administrator's office personally or have the ballot mailed to you, you may designate, on your application, someone to pick up the ballot for you.

- **Assignment to a different polling place** - Voters may notify the county election administrator in writing, at least seven days before the election, that they would like to be assigned to a nearby accessible polling place. Even though they may go to a different precinct to vote, they will still be voting their own precinct's ballot.

- **"Curbside voting"** - A last alternative is "curbside voting" where two appointed election judges take a ballot to a voter who has come to the voting location, but cannot enter the building. The election judges, by law, cannot reveal how that person voted to protect each voter's right to a secret ballot. To vote with "curbside voting" a person with a disability should contact the county election administrator before election day to work out the necessary arrangements.

As Secretary of State, I am responsible for establishing guidelines for the counties to follow to make voting as easy as possible. The rules established by this office require that each polling place must have instructions for

(Continued on Page 4)

## MILP HIRES ADA SPECIALIST

### A VIEW FROM THE BOARD By Sylvia Stevens

*"Who is sylvia, what is she?  
Unto her let garlands be."*

That is a line from a poem William Shakespeare wrote about me. But he didn't know that I spell my name 'Sylvia' though.

I have been involved with MILP since 1981. I was on the Advisory Council that was operating at that time under Sister Kennedy. I was in the first Peer Counseling training group, have been involved with the Handicapped Awareness Week trips to schools to talk about being handicapped and now am on the MILP Board of Directors.

Work, church, and other activities keep me away from the new home that I designed with me in mind. The counters are 32" from the floor, the oven is wall-mounted, and the pantry is everything that I dreamed for. Now, I have a few finishing touches that will keep me busy for many years, I am sure. I heard that once you have a house, there are continual repairs, additions, and odds and ends that keep a person busy.

I have worked at the Office of Public Instruction for eleven years now. I send out money to schools for their lunch and breakfast programs and vocational education programs. Computers are great to work on, when they are working!

MILP welcomes back former staff person, Les Clark. Les has accepted the position of ADA Specialist for the statewide Community Options Projects. This is a statewide project built upon partnerships between Monana Vocational Rehabilitation, the Montana Independent Living Council, and the four Montana centers for independent living. It is a collaborative project designed to initiate and expand employment opportunities by promoting the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The program will assist individuals with disabilities who are currently eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation/Visual Services (VR/VS) services and those individuals with disabilities who were previously eligible for VR/VS services and are at risk of losing their job.

The Community Options Project's goals are to improve the ability of professionals, consumers, and employers to work in a cooperative partnership to enhance the quality of vocational rehabilitation services and job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It will support the provision of training and technical assistance to consumers, VR/VS counselors, job placement professionals, job coaches, and employers regarding the implementation of the ADA.

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Division is providing funding for this Innovation and Expansion project.

Welcome aboard Les!

**FOCUS** is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement, and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

**Staff:** Jim Meldrum, Executive Director      Raelen Williard, Editor

**Board of Directors:** Jim Hosking, President; Jim Nys, Vice President; Glenn Jorgenson, Treasurer; Dennis Alexander, Helen Conroy, Pat McNeill, Tracey Reighard, John Shea, Grace Sicotte, Sylvia Stevens, and Richard Wootton.

**FOCUS** is also available in these formats: LARGE PRINT, Braille, Audio cassette, and computer diskette.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; 406-442-5755 or 800-735-6457 (voice, TDD).

## DOMME REPORTS ON DPHHS REORGANIZATION

The 1995 State Legislature passed legislation which combined several state agencies into one agency. This legislation was designed to make these agencies and programs more efficient, effective, and user friendly.

With the passage of this legislation, which became effective July 1, 1995, a new department called Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) was formed. It will include programs from Corrections and Human Services, Family Services, Health, and Social and Rehabilitation Services. Governor Racicot chose Dr. Peter Blouke, former director of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, to head the new department.

Since the new department will be the largest in state government, consolidate many existing agencies and programs, and effect over 3000 state employees, Blouke appointed an Advisory Council to assist in the organization/reorganization of DPHHS. This Advisory Council will examine and explore many ideas, approaches, concepts, and attitudes in forming and make recommendations to Blouke for his decision on the department.

The Council is made up of 33 members from around the state and represents groups, programs, and others which will be affected by the reorganization and development of DPHHS. Pat Domme, former President of the Board of Directors and Board member of MILP was chosen to serve on this Advisory Council. Domme is the only member of the Council who has a disability.

Domme states that it is surprising how many people with disabilities use the different programs in the new department. It is Domme's plan to try to represent the concerns of people with disabilities during this reorganization process and to make the voice of the disability community heard during the adoption of policies and procedures at DPHHS. Domme, who is blind, invites any comments, questions, or concerns.

Domme reports that, currently, the committee is working on drafting a mission statement for DPHHS and has looked at some suggested organizational charts. He also states that the monthly meetings held since July 26th, have been informative ones with much information being brought forward from the many programs and the employees group in the new depart-

ment. Blouke has informed the group that programs and funding will not be affected or changed by this reorganization and charged the group with the task of bringing all the agencies and programs together in an effective workable department. The Advisory Council has identified many points of interest including the need for a single entry point and the sharing of information between agencies as important concepts to keep in mind during the discussions.

The DPHHS reorganization Advisory Council meets monthly, usually in the Montana Higher Education Building in Helena from 9:00 am to 3:30 PM. Arrangements are being made to facilitate satellite hookups to these meetings in the future. Upcoming meetings will be held October 25, November 29, and December 20, 1995.

To confirm meeting dates and locations, request an accommodation, or request further information about the DPHHS contact: Anastasia Burton, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, P.O. Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210, Phone 406-444-2596 (voice) or Dr. Peter Blouke, Director, DPHHS, P.O. Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210, Phone 406-444-5622 (voice) or call either person through the Relay Service.

If you have comments or suggestions about the reorganization of Montana human services and the new DPHHS, contact Pat Domme, 2724 Amherst Ave., Butte, MT 59701, Phone 406-494-4571.

### ADA CHECKLIST UPGRADE...

Do you want to check to see if your office or facility complies with the *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*? Version 2.1 of the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities has recently been released and is now easier to use than ever! This practical 15-page guide gives direction on determining barriers in existing facilities and explains the process for planning "readily achievable" barrier removal.

To obtain a free copy of Version 2.1 or to get answers to your ADA questions, call MILP at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457 and ask for Raelen. (Additional copies are \$2.50 each.)

## **CALL ME AGAIN**

My name is Jeanne and I answer informational requests about assistive technology here at MILP. Considering the number of things I am asked about, it's not unusual that once in a while I am unable to answer a question, even after some in-depth research. Sometimes what seems like a simple request, both by the caller and by me, turns out to be difficult or impossible to fulfill.

For instance, it's easy to find a talking clock. They come in a myriad of shapes with beeps and crows as alarms. But what if you're looking for a talking clock that also tells you what day it is? Because you know about clocks, you check catalogs and lists for clocks and none of them tell you the day. You don't even think to look for a talking calendar until you see one in a catalog. Well just the other day, I found a talking calendar and it only costs \$20.00.

You wouldn't think that a large-print address book for people with low vision would be hard to find until you start looking for one. It sounds like a simple request, but you have to remember that a business somewhere has to recognize a market, develop and manufacture a product, and offer it for sale. Then the offering has to get to the customer or, in this case, me, before I can tell anyone how to find it.

To assist me in my searches, I have a computer database with thousands of entries and a library full of hundreds of catalogs. I have to be able to call a product by its correct name to find it on the database and have to have hours of time to search through catalogs. As you can imagine, I sometimes fail to find what I'm looking for and often I don't whether or not it even exists. However, sometimes you just have to rely on serendipity. In mid-September, both the products mentioned above showed up in the same brand new catalog.

So...if you were one of my callers and still need the products, call me back and I'll put you in touch with the source. If you find that this article has reminded you of a need for a device that will make your life easier, give me a call and I'll see what's available. I've been working with assistive technology for over a year now and that alone should help me turn up better answers in less time.

Contact: Jeanne Schutt, Montana Independent Living Project in Helena at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AT THE POLLING PLACE**

(continued from page 1)

voting and registering displayed in large print. In addition, each polling place must have a table not higher than three feet and with room to accommodate a wheelchair in a location that will guarantee the same secrecy as the regular polling booths.

As least one stylus or writing implement with a large, easily graspable handle must be at each location as well. The election judges must have extra seating available so that elderly voters can sit down and rest while they are waiting to vote.

For those with hearing impairments, I have installed a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at 406-444-4732 to get election information during regular business hours.

I strongly believe that everyone should take part in the election process. I have worked and will continue to work with the legislature and county election administrators to ensure that Montana's elections are fair and open for all to participate in. If your city or town is holding an election this year, you will be determining who will represent you in your local government. Elections are your opportunity to express your opinion.

If you have questions on this or any election matter, feel free to contact :

- 1) your county election administrator,
- 2) the Secretary of State's office at 444-4732, or
- 3) any of the four Montana independent living centers:

Billings-Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow at 259-5181 or 1-800-669-6319;

Great Falls-North Central Independent Living Services at 452-9834 or 1-800-823-6245;

Helena-Montana Independent Living Project at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457; or

Missoula-Summit Independent Living Center at 728-1630 or 1-800-398-9002.

If you have any suggestions or comments on how to make elections more accessible, please give me a call or drop me a note. I think we have an excellent system in Montana, but I am always looking for ways to improve it!

## FOR SALE

**Everest & Jennings electric wheelchair** - "hot wheels" youth size fits approx. 90 lb. person; Swing away foot rest, neck rest with shoulder brace to hold individual up and then locks in place, red in color, asking \$600.00 or best offer. **Apple 2-E computer** - fully enhanced with voice, detachable unicorn keyboard, dual disk drive, all software included. Monitor needs a picture tube. For more information, contact Jan in Butte at 782-3807 until 11 am and after 4 pm.

**Electric hospital bed** - Excellent shape; mattress & motor, 1 1/2 yrs. old, standard, purchased for \$1,000, will sell for \$400. Call Elaine in Helena at 443-6496 (leave message).

**Shower chair, Pillow Wedge, Reacher, Velcro Shoe Adapters, and Egg crate mattress.** For detailed descriptions and prices, call Brenda in Butte at 782-2031.

**1977 Dodge red and white van with lift** - runs good; Package includes **battery operated wheelchair** with joy stick. Asking price for both van and w.c. is \$1300.00. Call Jim in Chinook at 406-357-3887.

**Electric tread mill, \$250; Oxygen-maker machine, \$300; Walker \$35.00 OBO;** for information, call Don in Butte at 782-1834.

2 lifts for sale: **Ricon lift**, 650-lb load limit for conversion van, all electric, like new, retails \$5,000, asking \$2200 OBO; **Curbside lift**, suitable for back of station wagon or trunk, can lift wheelchair or scooter. Never been used, retail \$2500, asking \$2,000 OBO. Call Jean or Jerry in Great Falls at 452-9929.

**Chair lift for Chevy van:** electric hydraulic mounts on side door. Model #28LA+9+13, asking \$800 OBO. Call Butte, 782-5743.

**New deluxe wheelchair.** For information write 31 Meadow Court, Glasgow, MT 59230 or call 228-4276 (before noon).

**Electric mobility cycle chair II** - Deluxe; is street or sidewalk legal in all 50 states; has head and tail lights, horn, speedometer, odometer, tachometer, basket,

three-way comfort seat, charge gauges, built-in charger, two new gel cell batteries, chrome fenders, mount for sun Sunbrella, 25 miles to the charge; Cost new \$4,000; Asking \$2500 OBO; Call Dave in Helena at 443-2635 or write 1212 8th Ave., Helena, MT 59601.

**1989 27' Bounder Motor Home** - Excellent shape & low mileage; Has winch to lift person in with, plus inside installed track to use remote controlled winch to put person in bed or at dining table or passenger seat; Must see to appreciate. Will dicker. **Chrome Hoyer lift** - with chains, chain bars, and slings, \$450.00. **Seat lift reclining chair** - electric, brown in color, excellent condition, \$500.00. **Wheelchair carrier**, - fits on rear bumper hitch, with wheelchair cover, excellent condition, \$200.00. **Custom wheelchair-Active Aid** - with Whitmeyer head restraint, removable cushions, will fold for travel with removable wheels, \$750.00. **Folding wheelchair** - made by Rolls, with seat belts, leg belts, asking \$250.00. **Two drinking cup holders** - one brass, cloth straps, hangs over shoulders, pair for \$40.00 or \$20.00 each. **Teledyne water pik** - power tooth brush, have 3 power handles with extra brushes and one power charging unit, \$30. For information, call Lester in Butte at 494-7661.

**Everest Jennings Electric Wheelchair** - Rarely-used, older model. For details and cost, contact Mary in Billings at 656-1583.

**WANTED TO BUY: Reasonably-priced piano** with full keyboard, prefer Spinet or upright for small space. Call Steve in Wyola at 343-2622.

## HELENA MS SUPPORT GROUP MEETS

The Helena MS Support Group meets the first Saturday of each month. Meeting locations and times may vary depending on activities. The group offers fun activities and, sometimes, special speakers or programs. The next meeting is Saturday, November 4th at 10:00 A.M. and will be a no-host brunch at Jorgenson's Restaurant. For more information, call Fran at MILP at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

## FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS WORKSHOP OFFERED

A three-night course is being offered to teach all the ins and outs of buying a home for the first time - or as a refresher to people who have previously owned a home. The Helena Area Housing Task Force sponsors the workshop.

The course will run three nights: Monday, October 30; Wednesday, November 1 and Monday, November 6 from 6:00 to 8:30 PM each evening. They will be held at the Neighborhood Center on Cruise Avenue in Helena in Basement Level Room 13.

The classes will cover all the basics, from pre-qualifying and negotiating a loan to the closing process and how to work with Realtors, loan officers, home inspectors and insurance agents. All the many loan options will be thoroughly explained, including ones that make it more possible for low and moderate income people to buy their first home.

The fee for all three nights is \$25.00. Couples or any "two-somes" (bring a friend!) may attend for a discounted rate of \$40.00. Pre-registration is required because the class size is limited to 25 people. Send or

drop off your cash or check to Helena Area Housing Task Force, c/o Beki Brandborg, 616 Helena Avenue, Suite 300, Helena, MT 59601. For more information, please leave a message at 442-2265.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT ADA

Do you have a disability that "substantially limits one or more of your major life activities"? Do you know and understand your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

To help you learn more about ADA, MILP now has copies available of the three-volume set of booklets: *ADA: Questions and Answers*; *ADA Your Responsibilities as an Employer*; *ADA: Your Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability*.

To receive one free copy of this set, write MILP, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601 or call 442-5755 in Helena or 1-800-735-6457 and ask for Raelen.



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## HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY ADA! JULY 26, 1995

### WALLS

By Sally Christie

Disabilities come in many forms. The people affected by them are unique. Some are born with disabilities. Other challenges are brought about by life-style choices, such as poor diet, hard work, and other things. Some acquire their handicaps through accidents and many other Americans age into this minority.

The walls that exclude people with disabilities are diverse and unique. Some walls are physical in nature while others are made of stronger stuff. The barrier walls of attitude are the hardest to overcome.

I didn't choose my disability or have an accident. I was born with a skeletal disorder. My family included me in all aspects of life. The walls of my home were inclusive.

My disability affected my family in many ways. An employer could fire my father if he took extra time off to visit me in the hospital. My mother could be refused employment if someone suspected she would need time off to take care of me. My brothers and sisters had to endure teasing at school. The walls they scaled were high and wide.

I could be refused admission to theaters, restaurants, schools, and many other places. Architectural and attitude barriers kept me from many jobs I was qualified to do. The walls put up by employers were exclusive.

There was no legal way my family or I could climb the walls. We were members of a minority without civil rights.

"Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down." said George Bush as he signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law. The ADA would affect nearly every American. It is a civil rights

### ADA QUESTIONS?? CALL MEETING THE CHALLENGE!

Do you need information or training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? Do you have questions about your rights as an employee with a disability or your responsibilities as an employer? Would you like to know more about modifying your business to make the entrance, rest room, and access to goods and services more accessible? Or how to apply for tax credits or tax deductions for disability-related modifications? Do you live in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, or Colorado?

If so, for free ADA information, publications, or assistance, contact Meeting the Challenge, our Rocky Mountain Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) in Colorado Springs, CO at 800-949-4232 or 719-444-0252.

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## A VIEW FROM THE MILP BOARD

By Jim Nys, Vice President

I recently attended the White House Conference on Small Business in Washington, D.C. The Conference was a gathering of some 1700 small business owners who were elected to represent small business in their home states. A great deal of attention was focused on how regulators have changed the original intent of laws by the manner in which the law is enforced on a day-to-day basis. The unfortunate result is that much of the original political support that caused the law to be enacted in the first place then erodes and results in the law being either weakened or repealed.

One of the many proposals considered by the delegates to the Conference was one which read:

*"Congress should repeal or rewrite the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) because its provisions are undefined, complex, and too reliant on the judicial process for interpretation creating added costs and uncertainty for business owners."*

Of the 14 Montana delegates, only I voted against this proposal. When discussing the preliminary vote, other delegates cited examples that could easily be summarized as overzealous regulation as the reason for their position.

Even though I voted against the proposition, in my business as a personnel consultant I have observed numerous incidents in which individuals discharged by employers have tried to challenge the action based on the ADA. In one recent case, for example, a management employee who admitted to illegal cocaine use in the workplace is challenging his dismissal as a violation of the ADA. In another case, a person is challenging a dismissal based on dishonesty claiming the employer terminated her because it did not wish to accommodate a temporary sore wrist. The documentation submitted by the employees' own physician at the time stated there were no restriction on her work. Yet she is, in my view, manipulating the system to challenge a decision that had nothing to do with any alleged disability.

The results of these challenges are employers who are far less supportive of the ADA than they previously were. An often stated comment is "If this is what the ADA is all about, we can do without it." Although I believe both employers will ultimately prevail, they will spend countless hours and dollars proving the claims to be meritless. The employee, on the other hand, has nothing to lose; they don't even have the expense of hiring an attorney since the compliance agencies do all the work. Such problems also fueled lively debates about adopting a European-based "loser pays" system which would further erode the rights of persons with disabilities to bring charges of discrimination where such charges are bona fide.

*The enactment of the American's with Disabilities Act was a milestone for the rights of persons with disabilities. As we near the fifth anniversary of its signing, we must be vigilant to ensure that enforcement of the law is in accordance with the intent of its framers and that common sense prevails.*

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## **NETWORKING HELPS MEET ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GOALS**

### **What is assistive technology?**

- Mechanical, electronic and computer-based equipment, including wheelchairs, computers, electronic speaking and hearing devices, and other sophisticated equipment.
- Non-mechanical and non-electronic aids such as a ramp to replace steps or modified silverware to help someone eat.
- Specialized instructional materials, services and strategies such as large print for people with visual impairments.

### **And when you need something, how do you get it?**

- You network!

But, you're not part of a network and you wouldn't know how to go about joining one, right? Wrong! Do all your friends and acquaintances know each other? Chances are they don't, so you're probably a member of several networks already.

Networks are a part of life that help you meet your goals! There are all types of networks for all types of reasons: church, sports, children, education, health care. They all present opportunities to form networks.

### **And what do networks do?**

- Put you in touch with people who know people who know what you want to know.

Let's try that again. You need to know something, find something, or get something, and you don't know how. Then you start asking questions of everyone you know: "Who do you know who can help me understand, find, or get?"

Sometimes, the hardest part of networking is defining your need or asking the question in the right way so people can understand what you are looking for. This requires work and documentation on your part. You usually begin with general background information and work up to more specific information - the details you are looking for.

### **Is there an assistive technology network in Montana?**

- Yes!

Montana's Independent Living Centers (ILCs), Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK), and Action for Eastern Montana are the basis for your network. Each agency has staff trained to provide information and services to help people with disabilities find their way through the maze of information out there; understand social service programs and how to apply for services; and understand their options when services have been denied.

These agencies are part of a network of Access Cooperatives for Assistive Technology (ACATs) through the University of Montana's Rural Institute on Disabilities' MonTECH Program.

### **Who do I call for more information?**

- Call the agency nearest you and ask for the assistive technology specialist.

Western Montana - Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula, 406-728-1630 or 800-398-90902

Southwest Montana - MILP in Helena, 406-442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457

Central and northern Montana - North Central Independent Living Services in Great Falls, 406-452-9834 or 800-823-6245

Southeastern Montana - Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow in Billings, 406-259-5181 or 800-669-6319

Eastern Montana - Action for Eastern Montana in Glendive, 406-365-3364 or 1-800-488-3587

Children's issues - Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) in Billings, 406-657-2053 or 1-800-222-7585

## **ADA AND BUSINESS**

MILP now has copies available of the brochure "Improving your Rural Business with the ADA" and the flyer, "Facts About Disability-Related Tax Provisions." These resources contain information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), practical solutions for compliance and how to apply for tax credits or deductions related to ADA compliance. To request your free copy of these publications, call Raelen at MILP at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

## **OH, MY ACHING FEET! Tales of an ADA Surveyor...**

By Jeanne Schutt

Over the last two and a half years, as the MILP ADA Survey Coordinator, I've surveyed almost three-quarters of a million square feet. Trooping through parking lots, in and out doors, up stairs, and down hallways, I've recorded on paper and video tape the physical conditions of businesses, schools, government and private office buildings, non-profits, and community centers. Seventy-five or 80 buildings...with that many it's hard to keep track.

But what's a building survey got to do with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law? The ADA says that it's illegal to discriminate against people on the basis of disability. And how do we discriminate most often? Through our architecture... our built environment. People with disabilities cannot have equal access to goods and services if they can't get into a building where the goods and services are offered.

Now, getting back to all of those buildings, I have to admit that I didn't survey the whole 3/4 million square feet by myself. I had a lot of help...wheelchair users as well as able bodied folks...MILP staff members and other interested persons...all trained in the art of observing and measuring in accordance with checklists developed by the ATBCB otherwise known as the Access Board. Their 26 survey forms cover just about any physical space or feature of a building that you can think of, as well as the parking lot and the pathways leading to the designated accessible entrance(s).

What I have done by myself is prepare the written reports of the survey results. Whew! That's a lot of time in front of a computer but a written report is part of the package an agency or business gets when they pay MILP to do an accessibility survey. These written reports are the basis for a compliance or implementation plan that takes you from barriers to accessible. They identify barriers and suggested ways to "fix" those barriers.

We wish all barriers could be eliminated by waving a magic wand. But in existing buildings that have barriers such as steps, narrow halls and doors, small bathrooms, etc., we recommend a step-by-step approach. Do what you can afford now. Plan for the long term. Talk to your accountant about tax breaks. Revise your implementation plan

at least once a year and absolutely when you renew your lease, your financial picture changes, or you remodel or expand your business.

*To find out more details about the ADA or accessibility surveys, call MILP and ask to talk to me, Jeanne Schutt , at 442-5755 or 800-735-7457.*

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## **AROUND AND ABOUT OUR REGION...**

### **ADA In Dillon...**

One of the nice things that ADA is doing here in Dillon is making Western Montana College of the University of Montana accessible to "handicapable" students. An elevator is being installed to get to the classrooms and auditorium.

Five stars have to go to Quality Supply and manager, Brian Demars, for having a large store that has electric eye doors, and restrooms with grab bars. I recommend them for an ADA Award!

Anyone interested in vacationing in National Parks anywhere in the United States, there is a book called Access to National Parks. It talks about all the parks that are wheelchair accessible, etc. There is also a video tape available by the same name, Access to National Parks. These are available from the National Park Service or from your local book store. If you can't find them locally, you can order by calling the following: For the book, call 1-800-990-7274 (Cost is \$16.00 plus postage); For the video, call 1-800-633-5633 (Cost is \$19.95 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling).

- Contributed by Jerry and Lorene Burts

### **ADA in Helena...**

My compliments to JC Penney's in Helena where both the employers and employees have tried very hard to make my job more accessible for me. Employers need to be more aware of the benefits they obtain when hiring a disabled person. Just because we have a disability does not mean we are disabled!

- Contributed by Stacy

## FOR SALE

**Electric tread mill, \$400; oxygen-maker machine, \$500.00; manual wheelchair, for the bigger adult, \$50; walker, \$35.00;** for more information, call Don at 782-1834 (Butte).

**2 Lifts for sale:** **Ricon lift, 650-lb. load limit for conversion van, all electric, like new, retails \$5,000, asking \$2200 OBO;** **Curbside lift** suitable for back of station wagon or trunk; can lift wheelchair or scooter. Never been used, retail-\$2500, asking \$2,000 OBO. Call Jerry or Jean in Great Falls at 452-9929.

**Chair lift for Chevy van:** electric hydraulic, mounts on side door, Model #28LA+9+13, asking \$800 OBO. Call Butte 782-5743.

**New deluxe wheelchair.** For information write 31 Meadow Court, Glasgow, MT 59230 or call 228-4276 (before noon).

**1982 GMC full-size conversion van with Crow River lift.** For cost and information, call East Helena 227-5038.

**Electric mobility Cycle Chair II - Deluxe;** is street or sidewalk legal in all 50 states; has head & tail lights, horn, speedometer, odometer, tachometer, basket, three-way comfort seat, charge gauges, built-in charger, two brand new 230.00 gel cell batteries, chrome fenders, mount for sun Sunrella, 25 miles to the charge; Cost new \$4000.00; Asking \$2500.00 OBO; Call Dave in Helena at 443-2635 or write 1212 8th Ave., Helena, MT 59601.

**1989 27' Bounder Motor Home;** excellent shape & low mileage; Has winch to lift person in with, plus inside installed track to use remote controlled winch to put person in bed or at dining table or passenger seat; Must see to appreciate. Will dicker. **Chrome Hoyer lift,** with chains, chain bars, and slings, \$450.00. **Seat lift reclining chair,** electric, brown in color, excellent condition, \$500.00.

**Wheel chair carrier,** fits on rear bumper hitch, with wheelchair cover, excellent condition, \$200.00. **Custom wheelchair-Active Aid,** with Whitmeyer head restraint, removable cushions, will

fold for travel, with removable wheels. \$750.00.

**Folding wheelchair** made by Rolls, with seat belts, leg belts, asking \$250.00. **Two drinking cup holders,** one brass, other cloth straps, hangs over shoulders, pair for \$40.00 or \$20.00 each.

**Teledyne water pik, power tooth brush,** have three power handles with extra brushes and one power charging unit, \$30.00. For information, call Lester in Butte at 494-7661 evenings after 5 or on weekends.

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(Walls...Continued from page 1)

law that represents America's commitment to full and equal opportunities for all citizens.

In the five years since Congress passed this law, many "walls of exclusion" have come down. Some toppled down while others had to be chipped at. A few walls have refused to move. Others have been reinforced. The progress has been slow, but there has been progress.

I am glad my children have been born into a world with fewer barriers. My family and friends enjoy new civil rights.

It doesn't matter how you became challenged. If you have a disability or are a family member or friend, you have civil rights. Speak up for yourself if those rights are violated. Acknowledge the walls that include you. It is your world to enjoy and it has been a long time coming.

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## RTC OFFERS SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP

Are you thinking about starting a small business, but have more questions than answers? Then this workshop may be just right for you. This workshop is for entrepreneurs with disabilities, potential small business operators, and people who may assist others with the beginning stages of planning for a small business (i.e. vocational-rehabilitation or guidance counselors).

It will be held August 9, 9 am to 5 pm. For more information, contact Nancy Arnold, RTC: Rural, Room 52, Corbin Hall, University of Montana, Missoula 59812 or call 800-732-0323 (voice/TDD) and ask for Nancy or Denise Hamel.

**NEED TO EXERCISE?  
WANT TO EXERCISE?**

Joe Cullen, Helena Physical Therapist, is interested in getting a group together for exercising!

Do you use a wheelchair?  
Do you sit most of the time?  
Then this group is definitely for you!

If interested, fill out the following:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred day(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

"Exercise", 2698 Casper Drive,  
East Helena, MT 59635

Would you like to see a

demonstration of

**Dragon Dictate?**

A computer voice recognition system  
for Windows/DOS

Call Jeanne at MILP at 442-5755 or  
1-800-735-6457

**COMMON THREADS: 1995  
WORKING TOGETHER IN MONTANA**

**CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYMENT,  
ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND  
RURAL DISABILITY SERVICES**

**AUGUST 9-11, 1995  
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA  
MISSOULA, MONTANA  
1-800-732-0323**



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MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

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95-2

## STOP HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

### Fair Housing Centers

Federal and state laws protect individuals from housing discrimination. These laws make it illegal to deny a dwelling to any person due to: age, race, religion, physical or mental disability, gender, marital status, and family status (children under age 18 who live in your household). The first laws prohibiting discrimination date back to post Civil War years. But even today there are still significant discrimination problems.

Discrimination may be direct but more often it is subtle. If you suspect discrimination, and have questions or need information, call Marcia Dias at the Helena Fair Housing Center at 442-5506. Other Montana locations are: Billings, 256-9988; Great Falls, 727-9136; and Missoula, 542-2611.

### Montana Human Rights Commission

Located in Helena, the Montana Human Rights Commission is the state agency which enforces Montana's discrimination laws. The Commission consists of five persons and employs a staff to investigate complaints of discrimination.

The Commission Staff: accepts discrimination complaints, conducts impartial investigations of the complaints, attempts early resolution of each case, provides technical assistance and advice concerning discrimination law, and litigates housing cases in district court when substantial evidence exists that discrimination has occurred. For more information, contact the Montana Human Rights Commission at 444-2884 in Helena or 1-800-542-0807.

## 1995 VR PUBLIC FORUMS

The Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Division, the VR Advisory Council, and the Independent Living Council will be conducting their second phase of Public Forums seeking comments on the draft state plan, the Independent Living State Plan, and the Strategic Plan. The forums are to give service providers, consumers, organizations, groups, and citizens the opportunity to comment on these plans which will be available for review at the forum sites. If you cannot attend one of the forums you can send written comments to Montana VR, Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604

Meetings sites (below) are accessible and sign language interpreters will be available.

BILLINGS - MAY 2, 3-4 pm & 6-7 pm,

Radisson Northern Hotel, Dan Geiger,  
248-4801

BOZEMAN - May 11, 2-3 pm & 7-8 pm, Bozeman

Public Library, Priscilla Tharp, 587-0601

CROW AGENCY - May 3, 3-4 pm & 6-7 pm, Little  
Big Horn College, Dan Geiger, 248-4801

GREAT FALLS - May 2, 1-2 pm & 6-7 pm, Great  
Falls College of Tech, Larry Harlan, 727-7740

KALISPELL - May 2, 1-3 pm, SRS Office, Vona  
Sundberg, 755-5408

MILES CITY - May 4, 3-4 pm & 6-7 pm, Miles  
City Veterans Hospital, Kathy Beauchot,  
232-0583

MISSOULA - May 1, 1-3 pm, SRS District  
Office, John Collins, 329-5400

PABLO - May 3, 1-3 pm, Salish/Kootenai  
College, John Collins, 329-5400

## MILP STAFF CHANGES

### A VIEW FROM THE BOARD

By Jim Hosking

I would like to introduce myself as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Montana Independent Living Project (MILP). I hope to continue *The View from the Board Column* in future issues of *FOCUS* to give readers an opportunity to get to know the MILP board.

I have been involved in disability issues since college in the 1970s. My current community and disability involvements include: Access Montana, a disabled advisory board to the Deer Lodge National Forest; People Count Network, a group established to provide information on disabilities within our company and community; the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, as a member of the tourism committee; a member of the Local Energy Share Committee for Southwest Montana and, of course, Montana Independent Living Project Board.

My employer for the past sixteen years has been Montana Power Co. I am the Customer Service Supervisor for Western Region, Butte Office. I do Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility surveys for company facilities and make recommendations to meet ADA Accessibility Guidelines. This is a rather small part of my duties although it is probably the most interesting. The major portion of my job involves the supervision of eleven customer service representatives in the Butte office.

My job as Chairperson of MILP's Board of Directors is challenging. I feel that we must remain open to clients' needs. I will strive to maintain services to our clients at the highest level possible.

This spring, Karen Beddow, Independent Living Specialist, and Les Clark, Program Manager of the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) grant project, left MILP to pursue other areas of interest. Karen was responsible for client services in Gallatin, Meagher, Park, Sweetgrass, and Wheatland Counties. Les completed the final phase of the RWJ grant project in February.

We'll miss Karen and Les and we wish them well in future endeavors.

### HELENA CONDUCTS HOME REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The city of Helena is conducting a city-wide, home rehabilitation program with an emphasis on assisting elderly and/or homeowners with disabilities who live within Helena's city limits and meet the program's income limits. Up to \$15,000 can be provided for addressing such items as outdated wiring and plumbing, a leaky roof, inadequate insulation, and modifications necessary to make a home accessible for persons with disabilities.

Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. If you want to obtain an application to see if you qualify for this program, please contact Lynn Moon, Program Manager at 447-8411. If she is out, leave a message and she will call you as soon as possible.

### FOCUS - JULY 1995

Our next issue will celebrate the 5th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Send us your ADA stories, accomplishments, and goals for the future!

**FOCUS** is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

**Staff:** Jim Meldrum, Executive Director    Raelen Williard, Editor

**Board of Directors:** Jim Hosking, President; John Shea, Vice President; Glenn Jorgenson, Treasurer; Dennis Alexander, Helen Conroy, Pat McNeill, Jim Nys, Tracey Reighard, Grace Sicotte, Sylvia Stevens, and Richard Wootton.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; 406-442-5755 or 800-735-MILP (800-735-6457).

## GROUP PLANS ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IN HELENA

A group, headed by Helenans, Judy Backa and Ralph Anderson, is leading efforts to build accessible housing in Helena. The planned apartments, called Queen City Estates, will be for people with mobility impairments who seek an alternative to institutional care. The group is requesting funding through the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The apartments would be built by Accessible Space, Inc., (ASI), a private nonprofit organization working on accessible housing since 1978. ASI now nationally provides accessible housing and attendant care and services to 390 low-income adults with severe mobility impairments and/or traumatic brain injuries in 13 residential homes and 323 apartments.

Here in Montana, the ASI apartment building already in service is Eagle Watch Estates in Missoula. Last September, ASI received a HUD reservation for a 25-unit complex in Billings. This spring, ASI-Great Falls Mobility Impaired Housing will be breaking ground for a second apartment complex called Southwinds Estates.

The ASI apartments will be much more economical than institutional care. Through a unique consortium of funding sources, ASI can provide housing and attendant care services at 26% to 42% below the cost of institutional living care. Funding for the apartments, operation of additional services, and building upgrades comes from a variety of sources including agencies, foundations, third-party payers, corporations, private donations and private-pay individuals.

Individuals with mobility impairments have three basic needs: accessible, affordable housing; twenty-four hour access to supportive care services to assist with daily needs; and accessible transportation to provide the necessary mobility to achieve the highest level of independence possible. Once these needs are met, new horizons can be explored including education and employment.

Queen City Estates in Helena is still in the planning stages and can use assistance. Monetary donations to support the project can be sent to: Brian Taylor, Norwest Bank, 350 North Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana 59601. For more information about the project, call Ralph Anderson at 406-449-8155 or Judy Backa at 406-442-3647.

## COMING UP NEXT...

-Call MILP to list an event or conference in this space

**May 8:** Liability & Insurance Issues in Volunteer Programs. Videoconference with locations in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula. MT Office of Community Service/Montana State University Extension Office. For more information, call 444-5547.

**May 9 - 10:** Workshop on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Techniques and Practice sponsored by MT Dept. of Transportation (MDT). A technical workshop designed to provide planners, transit providers, engineers, community leaders, and interested citizens with information on TDM. For more information, call MDT's Special Studies Section at 406-444-4262 or 444-7289.

**May 10 - 11:** Governor's Advisory Council on Disabilities. 5/10-11 am - 5 pm; 5/11 -10 am - 4 pm at Public Employees Retirement Division Conference Room, 1712 Ninth Ave., Helena. For information or to request an accommodation, call Constance Enzweiler, 444-3794.

**May 22:** State Independent Living Council meeting, 10 am-3:30 pm at LIFTT in Billings. For More information, contact Vicki Turner at Montana Vocational Rehabilitation, SRS, in Helena at 444-2590.

**May 23:** Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council, 6-8 pm in Billings. For location and details, contact Joe Matthews at Montana Vocational Rehabilitation at 444-2590.

**June 21 - 22:** ADA Implementation for Public Schools. Rocky Mountain Location: Denver, CO. (Other locations throughout the U.S. in July and August) A two-day training program to help public elementary and secondary schools achieve full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Provided by the ADA: National Access for Public Schools Project, Adaptive Environments Center. Call for information or schedule of additional workshops to 617-695-1225 or write Adaptive Environments Center, 374 Congress St., Suite 301, Boston, MA 02210.

## NEW PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET

### **Attention Motorists with Disabilities!**

If you have ever needed a hand in getting gas or other services at a self service convenience station, Roy Morris has the solution. H.A.N.D., the Helping Attendant Notification Device, was developed by Roy Morris to help motorists in need of assistance. The size of a garage door opener, the H.A.N.D. is easy to operate and convenient to carry in any vehicle. By pressing a button on the H.A.N.D., an attendant inside any participating convenience store is alerted to your need for assistance and will respond accordingly.

There is no charge for the device, however there is a \$25.00 deposit required which is fully refunded if you choose to return your H.A.N.D. Currently, the H.A.N.D. is only operational at RD's Travel Stop in Butte, but plans are in the works to make it available to other self-service only convenience stores.

More information on this product may be obtained by calling Morris Marketing at 406-782-4255 or Market Revelations, Ltd. at 406-442-9819 in Helena.

### **New from Meeting the Challenge**

*For more details or cost and order information on the products listed below, contact: Meeting the Challenge, 3630 Sinton Road, Suite 103, Colorado Springs, CO 80907, 1-800-864-4264 or 719-444-0252 (v, tty) or 719-222-0269 (fax).*

**KeyAbility - Keyboard Layout Modification for One-Handed Operation:** The solution for one-handed keyboarding is here! KeyAbility improves the productivity of anyone using a computer with primarily one hand. KeyAbility allows you to change quickly from the standard layout to the left- or right-handed DVORAK layout with only a few keystrokes to optimize keyboard use when using a single hand. KeyAbility also provides a one-finger mode that enables you to press keys sequentially that normally need to be pressed at the same time.

KeyAbility is a software application that can be installed on any IBM or true IBM compatible personal computer system.

**AbleAide - The Case Management Solution for Post-Secondary Disability Providers:** AbleAide can track student contacts and services with greater ease than ever, generate reports on the number

of students served by disability type, or summarize the number of student contacts from last month by clicking a button. AbleAide integrates student case management needs assessment, an accommodations database, and reporting functions to make service providers' jobs easier. This comprehensive software comes with a 30-day money back guarantee and ongoing technical support!

**MoneyCoach** - The new standard for computer-assisted budgeting and checkbook management: MoneyCoach can be used by individuals with varying levels of cognitive ability and their service providers. Budgeting with Money Coach is quick and easy and budget concepts on the screen are represented with both text and pictures.

MoneyCoach minimizes the need for reading, writing, and math skills. MoneyCoach allows you to print ready-to-sign checks. Checkbook management features include: large on-screen number pad to enter amounts, checks automatically entered into the register, automatic balancing (no math skills required), and prevention from overdrafts.

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### **MONTANA ROAD REPORTS AVAILABLE FOR DEAF/HARD OF HEARING**

Montana Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) has installed a TTY line for any deaf and/or hard of hearing travelers to call for a road report for roads throughout Montana. The reports will detail road conditions, an especially valuable service during those spring snowstorms that have been moving across the state.

There will be no recording. So when a traveler calls for a report on a certain highway, the operator will look at the computer and then respond to the person with current road conditions. The service is not available on a 24-hour basis, but the operators do start at 6 am and do work on weekends, particularly during a storm. The TTY numbers for road reports are: Statewide: 800-335-7592 and Helena: 444-7696.

For more information about this service, contact Sam Prestipino at MDOT at 406-444-6334 (v) or 406-444-7696 (tty).

## FOR SALE

**Collins Electric Hydraulic lift** - (Model 28LA+9+183); fits Chevy van or equivalent; Asking \$1500; For more information, call Butte, 406-782-5743.

**RICON lift** - will fit any van with at least 39" clear side door; Asking \$750.00; Call Jim in Anaconda evenings and weekends, 563-3837.

**Braun lift** - will fit mini vans; fits Dodge Caravan with raised roof and side door. Purchase May 1990. \$800.00 cash only. Call Randy in Great Falls in am or pm at 453-9519.

**Lift Chair**, like new, maroon, \$450; **manual wheelchair**, \$75; **Walker**, 2 yrs. old, looks new, \$75.00; **Roho cushion with pump**, \$200; raised **toilet seat** with hand rails. Call Ken in Helen, 458-5062 (h) or 458-5512 (w).

**1985 Dodge Ram 3/4 Ton Van** - Equipped with Van Gator chair lift, hand controls, cruise control, power seat base, power doors with remote control, asking \$10,000. Call Fred in Wilsall at 406-578-2246.

**1983 Econoline Ford Van** - 351 engine, air conditioning, all electric lock system, deluxe wheelchair lift (Wind River), hand control operations, automatic cruise control, c.b. radio, more added options; extra clean deluxe vehicle; asking \$8950. Call Don in Great Falls, 406-452-5631.

**Two Amigo scooters** - One scooter, new in Dec. 1990, rear wheel drive, has recharger, 9" wheels, deluxe, asking \$1200.00 OBO. Second scooter, 6" wheels; new tires, wheels, and seat; has recharger, asking \$600.00 OBO. Purchase both scooters for \$1500.00. Call Erhart in Helena at 442-9319.

**Electric rocker** - Seat raises to semi-standing position, all components are good, chair is approximately 5 yrs. old, tan cloth (need upholstered). Will accept best offer. Call Jerry in Dillon at 683-5768.

**Rascal II electric mobility scooter** - needs batteries. Asking \$300. Call Winnie in Great Falls at 452-5460.

**1988 Ford Tempo** - Approximately 78,000 miles; thoroughly checked out every spring, runs very well; white with red interior; Air, tilt, power locks, 6-way power seat; MPS Monarch Mark I-A hand controls; Asking \$2500. Call Cinda or Dave in Bozeman at 585-1730.

Don't be disabled because of a disability. You can be in control with this **Super Scout 3-wheel mobility cart**. Has 2 baskets, battery charger, and electric freedom lift. (Just push a button) Fits on back of car for easy hauling. Approx. 3 years old. \$2790.00 value. Will sell all for \$1400. Call Billings, 248-7411.

**Geriatric chair**, special order for tall gentleman. Chair is completely padded/cushioned, rust in color and reclines. On wheels. Has a tray that folds down on the side. Call Linda in Butte at 494-4777 after 5.

**Brand new walker**, never been used. Call Doris in Helena at 442-7018.

## WANTED TO BUY

**Mini-van** with a raised roof and/or lowered floor, or a small, economical regular-sized van with interior height approximately 58"; Priced around \$10,000 or less. Call Karen collect at 406-961-4425.

**3-Wheel bicycle** for adult; good condition & reasonably priced. Call Leo in Helena at 443-2355.

## ADA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law that requires all newly designed or newly constructed buildings and facilities be accessible under the provisions of the *ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*.

MILP can help your business or organization by providing free answers to your ADA questions. In addition, MILP offers fee-based trainings and technical assistance such as plans review for remodeling and new construction, accessibility surveys of buildings, and help with implementation plans. For more information or to set up a free consultation, call Jeanne Schutt at MILP in Helena at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

Second Annual Conference  
on Services to People  
who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing:

### ***LEGAL ISSUES***

June 16-17, 1995  
Great Falls, Montana

Continuing Legal Education Units and  
Graduate Credit available

For Information, Contact Faith Timm  
(406) 727-7740 (v, tty)

Sponsored By:  
Rehabilitation Services/SRS  
College of Great Falls  
Montana Association of the Deaf  
Montana State Bar Association

### **ALTERNATE FORMAT REQUEST**

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(Enclose mailing label below  
or call 1-800-735-6457)

- Delete my name from list  
 Change name/address  
 Add my name to list

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## MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

WINTER 1995

95-1

### LEGISLATIVE DAY - JANUARY 26 YOU'RE INVITED!

The Montana Consortium for Assistive Technology (MCAT) will sponsor Legislative Day activities on Thursday, January 26, 1995. There will be a Legislative training during the day and an evening reception for legislators, their spouses, and all others interested in the legislative process.

The legislative training workshop will be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Helena at a location to be announced. It is for people with disabilities, their families, and their advocates and is jointly sponsored by MCAT and MonTECH. The training will provide participants information on how the legislative process works and how to be more effective in expressing needs to the legislative body. Sign language interpreters and handouts in print and alternative formats will be available. From 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., workshop participants will have an opportunity to go to the Capitol and see the Legislature in action. Those who feel comfortable can use their new skills while meeting with their Legislator or participating in hearings that may be held that day.

The average cost for the training is \$15.00 per person and includes written materials, transportation to and from the Capitol and the training site, and lunch. Workshop sponsors suggest that participants make a contribution of \$5.00 to offset the costs of this training. A contribution of more than \$5.00 is appreciated and a contribution of less than \$5.00 still gets you in the door!

TO REGISTER AND FIND OUT THE WORK-

SHOP LOCATION, PLEASE CALL ROXIE AT 1-800-732-0323 BY JANUARY 23RD AT 4:00 PM. In Missoula, call 243-5676.

The Legislative Day reception will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Helena. This reception for Legislators and their spouses will provide an informal time for Legislators to meet Montanans with disabilities and their advocates and wind up an "event-full" day.

### LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION AVAILABLE

The 54th Legislative Session officially began on January 3, 1995. During the session, Representatives and Senators and their staff traditionally work a six-day week, work holidays, review hundreds of bills, and make decisions that affect all Montanans.

Would you like to keep track of what's going on during the Legislative Session, learn the status of bills, find out when hearings are being held, find out how your legislator feels about a key issue, or express an opinion to a legislator? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, here's the Legislative Information Office phone number for your rolodex... 1-406-444-4800. Note that this service used to be provided free of charge with a toll free number and now is a long distance call. The Legislative Information Office hours are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon, Saturday.

## **FIRST BANK OFFERS ACCESSIBILITY FINANCING PROGRAM**

Individuals with disabilities sometimes need financing for home modifications, automobiles and vans, assistive devices or independent living aids. *First Bank* offers financing options specifically for home improvements and other products that can help an individual lead a more comfortable and independent life.

They offer competitive rates for both fixed and variable rate loans. This special loan program requires little or no down payment, depending upon what you are financing. Flexible term options are available to fit individual needs.

Applicants who meet the definition of disability under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and meet certain qualifications are eligible for these program benefits. For information on the ADA definition of disability, call Montana Independent Living Project.

Loans are available for up to 95% of the purchase price of a car or van equipped with adaptive driving controls. The cost of the adaptive equipment, installation, and taxes can be included in the loan with terms up to seven years for cars and vans.

Home improvements, including accessibility modifications can be financed. Options for home improvements can include a home equity secured loan or an unsecured loan. Home equity secured installment loans begin at \$5,000 and have loan terms of up to 15 years. Unsecured home loans are available for loans under \$10,000 with a maximum loan term of ten years.

Loans are also available for items such as

communications devices; portable ramps and lifts; and seeing-eye, hearing or working companion dogs with terms up to four years. You can borrow up to 100% of the purchase price of a motorized wheelchair, with a maximum term of seven years.

If you have questions, contact a Personal Banker at any of the following First Bank locations in Montana: *First Bank Billings*, 406-657-8000; *First Bank West Billings*, 406-657-8539; *First Bank Bozeman*, 406-585-5200; *First Bank Butte*, 406-723-6581; *First Bank Great Falls*, 406-455-1000; *First Bank West Great Falls*, 406-455-1100; *First Bank Havre*, 406-265-1211; *First Bank Helena*, 406-447-5200; *First Bank Miles City*, 406-232-1610; *First Bank Missoula*, 406-523-2300; and *First Bank Downtown Missoula*, 406-523-2300.

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## **GRANTS AVAILABLE TO VETERANS**

Attention veterans! Home Improvement Structural Alteration (HISA) Grants are available to veterans for home improvement projects which may include, but are not limited to: ramps and accessibility retrofits to kitchens, baths, hallways, etc. Depending on their qualifications, veterans can borrow up to \$1200 for nonservice-related disabilities and up to \$4100 for service-related disabilities.

For more information, contact the HISA Grants information office at the Veterans Administration at Fort Harrison at 1-800-827-1000.

**FOCUS** is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

**Staff:** Jim Meldrum, Executive Director      Raelen Williard, Editor

**Board of Directors:** Pat Domme, President; Glenn Jorgenson, Secretary/Treasurer; Dennis Alexander, Helen Conroy, James Hosking, Pat McNeill, Jim Nys, Tracey Reighard, John Shea, Grace Sicotte, Sylvia Stevens, and Richard Wolett.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; 406-442-5755 or 800-735-MILP (800-735-6457).

## **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CONDUCTS PUBLIC FORUMS**

The Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division (MVR) of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC), and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) will be conducting statewide public forums seeking comments on how services are offered.

MVR will be asking the questions "How have we been doing?" and "How can we do a better job?". This series of public forums will give Montana citizens an opportunity to tell MVR, VRAC, and SILC how they have been doing in providing vocational rehabilitation and independent living services and to provide suggestions to help them do a better job in the future. This information will be used to help develop the three-year MVR/SILC State Plans and Strategic Plan which are required by the federal Rehabilitation Act and its amendments. MVR and SILC value your input and comments in the long range planning process.

The federal Rehabilitation Act provides money to states to provide, expand, and improve independent living (IL) services, to develop and support statewide networks of centers for independent living, and to improve working relationships among other IL services in the state. In order for a state to participate in the federal programs, it must submit to the federal government a plan for the State independent living program and centers for independent living. The plan is written by the SILC and MVR. It is usually submitted once every three years. The State plan must conform with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements in order to receive funding. Independent Living plans and activities are centered around the provisions outlined in the State Plan. The State Plan serves as a measurement of the State's performance in carrying out the assurances to which the state commits itself.

The forums, listed below, will be held in accessible locations and sign language interpreters will be provided. If you can't attend one of the meetings, you can send written comments to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division, Box

4210, Helena, MT 59601.

For more information on the hearings or the planning process or to request a copy of the previous MVR/SILC State Plans or the Strategic Plan, call Bill Lamb at MVR in Helena at 444-2590.

### **FORUM SITES:**

**Billings** - Feb. 13th, 3-4:00 p.m. & 6-7:00 p.m., Radisson Northern Hotel, Broadway Room. Contact person: Dan Geiger, 248-4801.

**Bozeman** - Feb. 2nd, 1-3:00 p.m. & 7-9:00 p.m., Bozeman Public Library, 220 East Lamme. Contact person: Priscilla Tharp, 587-0601.

**Crow Agency** - Feb. 1st, 3-4:00 p.m. & 6-7:00 p.m., Big Horn Community College-Student Lounge. Contact person: Dan Geiger, 248-4801.

**Great Falls** - Feb. 7th, 1-3:00 p.m. & 6-8:00 p.m., Great Falls College of Technology, 2100 16th Ave. So. Contact person: Larry Harlan, 727-7740.

**Kalispell** - Feb. 6th, 1-3:00 p.m. & 6-8:00 p.m., SRS District Office, Conference Room, 2282 Hwy 93 So. Contact Person: Vona Sundberg.

**Miles City** - Feb. 2nd, 3-4:00 p.m. & 6-7:00 p.m., Miles City Community College, Room 106. Contact person: Kathy Beauchot, 232-0583.

**Missoula** - Feb. 9th, 1-3:00 p.m. & 6-8:00 p.m., SRS District Office, Conference Room, 1610 South 3rd West. Contact person: John Collins, 329-5400.

**Pablo** - Feb. 7th, 12-2:00 p.m., Salish Kootenai College, Conference Room, Charlo Building. Contact person: John Collins, 329-5400.

### **HELP OUR SPEAKERS BUREAU**

MILP still need speakers to volunteer for our speakers bureau! For more information, call Melinda at MILP today!

## **STATE TRAILS EFFORT GETS STARTED**

By Jeff Erickson  
MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Montana recently launched a process to develop a comprehensive, state-wide trails plan. The Plan will include an inventory of all public trails in Montana, assess attitudes about trails and trail use, and make recommendations about Montana's future trail system. Access issues are expected to be an important part of the Plan.

The Plan is intended to be Montana's first big-picture look at how the various trails in the state fit together. The initiative is not meant to usurp the responsibility of the various agencies who manage trails. The goal is to enhance the understanding trail managers and users have of the state's trail network and the demands being placed on it, in order to make wise long-range decisions.

Trail managers need to know who the trail users are, what they want, where they go, and when they like to use trails. This information will assist managing authorities to provide better service to trail users, and help everyone work together more efficiently, avoiding duplication and placing scarce resources where they are needed the most.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is taking the lead staff role in developing the Plan. FWP staff are being assisted by a recently appointed technical planning committee and a representative has been appointed to speak for disabled access issues on the Committee. Along with the Planning Committee, the pre-existing State Trails Advisory Committee (composed of representatives from all major trail user groups) is expected to play a significant role in helping develop and review the Plan.

In addition to input from the Planning and Advisory Committees, a series of public meetings will be held around the state to provide information about the planning effort and

gather public input. The more input received from trail users, the better the Plan is likely to be. If you have comments or questions about the Montana State Trails Plan effort, please contact:

Jeff Erickson  
MT Department of Fish,  
Wildlife and Parks  
1420 E. 6th Ave.  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 444-3818

## **ATTENTION! ATTENTION!**

*FOR ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE ALWAYS  
WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR OR ACTRESS,  
OR JUST PLAIN HAVE FUN - NOW IS YOUR  
CHANCE!!!*

Casey Brown of Carroll College will be offering a FREE acting workshop especially designed for persons with a disabilities. The workshop will begin January 16th and will end February 1st. Sessions will be three time a week - Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

If you are interested or know of someone with a disability who would be interested, please call Casey at 447-4982 in Helena.

## **ADA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that requires that all government programs and businesses that serve the public guarantee freedom from discrimination against people with disabilities. The first step in complying with ADA is identifying barriers that might keep people from being able to get into your building or access your services.

Montana Independent Living Project can help you comply with ADA by: providing answers to your questions, plans review for remodeling and new construction, accessibility surveys of buildings, and assistance with implementation and self evaluation plans. For more information, call Raelen Williard at MILP.

## SPECIALISTS HELP FILL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Have you ever heard the phrase that goes something like this - "You may not realize that what you heard was not what I meant"? Well, Montana Independent Living Project (MILP) was recently the topic of a news release that left the readers with a bit of confusion about our assistive technology (AT) program. The story in question was published in many small-town newspapers, as well as the major dailies in our region, witnessed by calls we received from Townsend, White Sulphur Springs, Dillon, etc. Since the story was kind of misleading, we thought you'd like to know what it really means.

Because of a grant from the MonTECH program at the University of Montana, MILP can provide the following services:

**Loan-Lease Equipment Services:** MILP can arrange to loan different types of adaptive equipment for a period of up to three months to people with disabilities. Some equipment is housed in our offices in Helena and the remainder is located at various other Montana agencies who also cooperate in this effort. Most of the services are free, but some agencies do charge a fee. A few of the items located in Helena include: hand driving controls, a speaker phone, a personal PA system (assistive listening device for group presentations), a baby stroller designed specifically for infants with disabilities, and old, old computers.

Through this loan-lease program you can "try before you buy" or meet a short-term need. For instance, the hand controls were requested by a woman whose son was flying home for Christmas and wanted to be able to drive the family car while he was visiting.

The computers we have are reconditioned dual drive IBMs with limited memory and are available on a six-month loan. A word processing software is available, but printers are not available. A few of the computers have modems installed for access to your calls to bulletin boards and information services.

A few older Apple computers are also avail-

able. However, software that runs sophisticated programs, such as voice activated word processing, requires computers with much more memory and with an operating speed that far exceeds the computers donated to the program thus far. These computers are great for people learning to keyboard or who want to improve their typing accuracy or speed.

The loan pool includes: augmentative communication devices, speaking aids, aids for hearing, alerting systems, mobility or positioning aids, visual aids, daily living aids, and switches as well as computer hardware, software, and peripherals.

**Information and Referral:** This doesn't sound like much, but through this service MILP staff can help you in many different ways. We can help you: 1) put a name to what you need by providing descriptions of existing products, 2) tell you where you can buy them, and 3) sometimes even provide instructions for do-it-yourselfers. We do this with the aid of computer programs and a multitude of catalogs. We can also help you brainstorm how you can pay for the device(s) you need. This can be anything from identifying entitlement programs you might be eligible for to suggesting charitable sources or identifying loan programs that are designed specifically for people with disabilities.

If you would like more information, or you would like to borrow from or, yes, even donate to the Assistive Technology program, contact Jeanne Schutt at the MILP office.

## HELENA MS SUPPORT GROUP MEETS

The Helena MS Support Group meets the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the MILP office at 38 South Last Chance Gulch. The group offers fun activities and, sometimes, special speakers or programs. The next meeting is Saturday, February 4. For more information, call Fran at MILP.

## FOR SALE

**Wheel chair lift**-12 years old, Wheel Evaton, electric standard for adult or child. Exterior - can be used at deck or door. For information, call Judy in Helena at 442-6314.

**1983 Econoline Ford Van**-351 engine, air conditioning, all electric lock system, deluxe wheel-chair lift (Wind River), hand control operations, automatic, cruise control, c.b. radio, more added options; extra clean deluxe vehicle; asking \$8,950. Call Don in Great Falls, 452-5631.

**Two Amigo scooters**-One scooter, new in Dec. 1990, rear wheel drive, has recharger, 9" wheels, deluxe, asking \$1200.00 OBO. Second scooter, 6" wheels; new tires wheels, and seat; has recharger, asking \$600.00 OBO. Purchase both scooters for \$1500.00. Call Erhart in Helena, 442-9319.

**1985 Dodge Ram 3/4 Ton Van**-Equipped with Van Gator chair lift, hand controls, cruise control,

power seat base, power doors with remote control, asking \$10,000 OBO. Call Fred in Wilsall at 578-2246.

**1989 Dodge Caravan LE**, converted for wheel chair use with Kneelcar lift, 30,000 miles, automatic, 6 cyl., a.c., radio, tape player, good condition. Asking \$16,500 OBO. **Adult wheel chair**, good condition, \$250.00. **Commode chair with swing-away arms**, \$150.00. **Hoyer lift with sling**, \$450.00. **Adjustable walker**, \$20.00. **High-rise commode**, \$10.00. **Transfer Board**, \$2.00. **Recliner with seat lift**, brown upholstery, \$300.00. All items OBO. Call Zella in Helena at 442-9192.

## FREE

Free to Someone with a disability-Desk, 77" x 68" u-shaped with drawers; blue formica removable top with work surface 32" from floor. For more information, call Tom Scott, M SU, 1-800-523-4342.



**MONTANA INDEPENDENT  
LIVING PROJECT**

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